
LABOUR'S PLAN

FOR

CAMBRIDGE

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CAMBRIDGE LABOUR PARTY

NORFOLK TERRACE, CAMBRIDGE

OFFICERS, 1945.

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Having read this pamphlet you will wish—

To learn more about Labour's Plan for the Nation

To join the Party and be in the Fight.

JOIN TO-DAY. Your help and financial support will be needed
so that we can win the forthcoming Municipal Election.

Applications and donations to our funds should be sent to the
Treasurer, 111, Blinco Grove, Cambridge.

April, 1945

2nd Edition October, 1945

FOREWORD

BY

MAJOR A. L. SYMONDS, M.B.E., M.A.,

M.P. for the Borough

In this pamphlet you will read of Labour's plans for the future well-being of our town. It is on these plans, and on the policy of which they are the practical expression, that you are invited to record your vote on 1st November.

At the recent General Election you did me the honour of electing me as your representative in Parliament, because you felt that in national politics a new forward-looking spirit was needed, and a drive to build a new Britain worthy of its people. I now appeal to you to finish the job, and forge a link between Cambridge Town Hall and the Government, by electing a Council which will give full support to the Government's plans for reconstruction.

The connection between Local and Parliamentary Government is a close one. A Labour Government can plan on national lines to build a better Britain, but the Councils can make or mar its schemes by the manner in which they carry out that plan in its local application. Councils with a Labour majority can be relied on to back the Government's schemes with a really energetic drive. Housing, our most urgent local problem, can only be solved by such a drive, with the Council and the Government working in the closest harmony.

Our present Labour Councillors have already shown their calibre by their work on the Council, and in this carefully-thought-out pamphlet they outline how much more they can do if you, the people of Cambridge, give them reinforcements to their numbers and make Labour's voice on the Council really effective.

INTRODUCTION

BY

ALDERMAN W. L. BRIGGS

At the approaching municipal elections, the voters of Cambridge will decide the future policy of local government administration in their Town. The opportunities and problems of reconstruction demand careful thought from each one of us. The Labour Party group on the Borough Council have met many times to formulate their plans, and we now present, on behalf of the Cambridge Labour Party, the framework of a policy—one which all Labour Councillors will strive to see carried out.

Here, then, are Labour's ideas about YOUR home town—about HOUSING, EDUCATION, MATERNITY and CHILD WELFARE, PUBLIC SERVICES and so on. Here are our aims for the future, and they affect you vitally. They are part of Labour's national plan, which aims at giving better wages and social security, equal opportunities and good living conditions so that all can develop their capabilities, and which aims at preventing unemployment, disease and wasted lives. The experience of the last 25 years has shown that we must have careful planning to realise these aims and in this, local government has its part to play.

So here are our ideas about planning in Cambridge. This pamphlet is to show you that the Labour Party is thinking hard about the problems which challenge us all. If you agree with our policy, we invite you to join us and give the support that is essential if ideas are to become achievements.

THE FIRST PROBLEM—HOUSING

Anyone who lives in Cambridge knows that our most urgent problem is **housing**.

The acute shortage of houses is a source of tragedy in the lives of many. Sharing a house is seldom a success, especially when it means no proper facilities for cooking and storing food, and having to share the water supply and lavatory common to the whole house. For most families, a house of their own is still an essential of happiness, and in Cambridge we have a double duty—to build houses for those without them, and to provide decent houses for the large number who indeed have homes of their own, but who are forced to live in houses and streets that should have been pulled down years ago. Even when our war-time evacuee population disappears, many new houses will still be needed.

The number of applicants for Borough Council houses has increased from about 1400 in 1936 to about 2500, and is still increasing, at the rate of some 500 per annum. Nor must it be forgotten that many who need houses very badly have not sent in their names because of the large number already on the lists. Look at the following Table.

TABLE SHOWING MARRIAGES IN CAMBRIDGE, 1920-1938.
AND HOUSES BUILT

Period	No. of Houses built		Total Houses built	No. of Marriages
	by local authority	by private enterprise		
1920-1925	417	396	813	2843
1926-1930	849	819	1668	2255
1930-1935	884	1555	2439	2582
1936-1938	331*	1385†	1716	1642
Total: 1920-1938	2481	4155	6636	9322

* Includes 28 flats.

† Includes 65 flats.

It shows how few were the houses built in the Borough since 1920 compared with the number of marriages that have taken place. Although not every marriage necessitates a house, the number of families in the Borough was not decreasing before the war, and it is

clear that the housing problem will persist until we have made up the gap. The Table also shows that before the War far more houses were built by private firms than by the Council. Since the privately built houses were mainly for sale, many of the people in worst need of a house had either to go without or be saddled with a mortgage which they could not afford.

Cambridge has to find a solution to this problem.

TOWN PLANNING

The solution to the housing shortage must link up with Town Planning. We do not want jerry-built estates with inadequate open space and no facilities for community life, nor shall we be content to leave the future of the Town to the tender mercies of the absentee landlord or the speculative builder. Visitors to Cambridge usually see only the most beautiful parts—the spacious University section: but in reality the Town is a hard problem for the planner, for in other districts there is considerable overcrowding and bad housing. To solve the problem, to give us a town to be proud of as a whole, the Labour Party insists on planning. The undeveloped land round the Borough was planned before the War and the scheme approved, so that, but for the War, the plan would have been carried out. It has now to be reconsidered, and perhaps amended by the new machinery for planning. Labour supports this means of planning the Town, and now submits a threefold programme—operating within the limits of the Town Plan—to relieve the housing shortage.

1. The Immediate Situation.

The immediate need is for the *largest possible number* of separate dwellings *in the shortest possible time*. Temporary bungalows—Portal houses, or whatever they may call them—will, we hope, be provided under the Government scheme. These must be on sites where they will not interfere with the plans for permanent houses, which can be started at the same time. Government Army huts should be taken over and adapted, for the need is urgent. A number of large houses at present requisitioned will probably be released, and many of these can be converted into flats.

2. The First Five Years.

Even while temporary houses are being provided, a beginning must be made with the building of permanent houses. The urgency of the problem must not make us lower our standards. The average family house must have a minimum of three bedrooms and two living rooms: its kitchen must be well planned and its garden pleasing and open.

HOW do we envisage a Housing Estate? In the middle should be a community centre with a branch library, a clinic and a recreation ground. Then there will be schools and shops and churches—in fact a properly planned estate will become a happy community.

There should be bungalows for older people and houses of various sizes, all on the same "Estate."

In addition, flats are urgently needed in certain areas of the Town. Those intended for old people should include provision for nursing care and domestic help, and all should have communal hot water supplies and means of refuse disposal.

Many of these buildings will be of brick, in the traditional style, but we must be open to new ideas, and they must be supplemented by houses built of prefabricated units in which the same high standards of construction are maintained. It is a mistake to think the pre-war brick house is an achievement upon which we can never improve.

3. A Long-term Programme.

A long-term programme ought to aim at the purchase within the Borough of really large sites for development, suitable for 3,000 or 4,000 houses in all. The sites could then be planned as a whole and their future development controlled. The Council has already accepted this programme, and only the lack of consent from the Ministry of Health prevents it from going forward.

At the same time there must be an expanded programme of demolition and rebuilding in the worst slum areas, so that, as houses are removed, new ones are available, and the sites of the demolished houses can be planned anew.

There remains the question of who is to build these new houses. The Labour Party would like to see as many as possible built and owned by the Council. This would mean priority for the type of house required by working people. The rents of Council houses are not high, and there is a great deal to be said for municipal ownership on general grounds. The upkeep of Council houses is above the average, and security of tenure is complete. Moreover, with public ownership and supervision we can make sure that proper standards of building materials and construction are maintained.

The whole of this programme will cost money, and we do not yet know what grants the Government will make or whether they will adopt the Labour Party plan of lending money at interest rates below the normal for housing purposes. Certainly, such a cost will not be borne by the rates. At present, the large municipal housing schemes only cost the town a 5d. rate. No part of our expenditure, perhaps, gives a better return in the health and happiness of the population. The housing problem is one for us all to solve, and achievements here will bring comfort and convenience, in many cases for the first time, into the lives of our people.

EDUCATION

All over the country people are determined that out of the War must come a Britain moving towards a more just and equal form of society. Whether this will happen depends so much on our younger

people that we must make certain that education allows each child to develop his personality to the full and inspires him with the idea of service to the community.

The Labour Party will do all in its power to make sure that the children of Cambridge benefit to the utmost from the new Education Act. We realise that we cannot be niggardly with money here: education must depend on the child's needs and not on the parent's pocket. We look forward to the time when the school leaving age can be raised to 15 and then to 16, and we support the proposals for further education on a part-time basis up to 18 years.

NURSERY SCHOOLS

Many parents with children under five would like them to attend nursery schools or classes, and we must meet their wishes, for the nursery school gives children a good start—they become accustomed to regular habits, including a midday meal and sleep, and have medical care from the first. For these, we need more buildings, which should be bright, modern and attractive.

JUNIOR SCHOOLS

Many Junior School buildings are small, gloomy, and very inadequately heated. New schools in airy surroundings and with good playgrounds must replace those which are cramped and out of date; they should be placed carefully so that no child need go far from home.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

More and better schools for all children over eleven should provide four- or five-year courses of rising standard and of different types. Equipment should be of a high quality, to help each child to find an outlet for its gifts, and both the specially bright and the backward children must have the kind of teaching that they need.

HEALTH AND RECREATION

The good health of the children must be a primary aim. All children must be able to have their dinner at school if their parents wish it, for well-organised school dinners provide proper nourishment and valuable training as well. Regular medical and dental treatment must back this up.

Well spent recreation is important for every child. There must be good facilities for games and physical training. All children *must have the chance of learning to swim*, and for this we need a covered swimming bath in Cambridge. A school camp in the heart of the country would enable parties of children to learn about country life, and they would gain from the experience of camp. Those in need of a change of air could make a longer stay.

Youth Centres organised by the Education Authority cater well for young people in their leisure time, striking a balance between amusement, culture, and, with their own elected leaders, training for citizenship. Young people are better there than walking the streets: we must not be sparing in financial help for these centres.

So, careful planning will enable us to have a fine educational system for all children and young people. Let us remember that on their mental and physical health depends the future of our community.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A good educational policy will include more and better libraries for the Town. We need as soon as possible improved Central and Branch Libraries, catering for all needs to the full, with a fine range of educational books to assist the work of adult education.

In particular, there is urgent need for improvements at the Central Library. The building needs modernising, and there must be more space for the larger number of books that are necessary. The Reference Library must be built up until it is one that a University town can be proud of, and there should be in the Central Library a Juvenile Department, bright and well planned, with a children's reading room. An extended and modernised Central Library would encourage and assist adult education and foster an interest in reading. There should be a room for regular book displays and exhibitions of national or local interest.

Round this Central Library must be grouped a system of Branch Libraries, each with a reading room and children's section. Separate buildings are needed at Trumpington, Cherryhinton, and in the East Road and East Barnwell areas, together with better premises in Mill Road. At as many of these branches as possible there should be a room for lectures or tutorial classes. A system of book boxes for the Youth Centres could be started, and the Library service should include the provision of books to schools.

The organisation of a modern library policy is a skilled task for which trained officials are needed. We must, therefore, be sure that the wages and salaries of our library staff are at a higher level than before the War, so as to attract the best service.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE

In many towns to-day, municipally-owned Maternity Homes are an essential link in the whole system of services planned to offer all our children the best possible start in life. Such Municipal Maternity Homes maintain the highest standards and are among the finest in Britain. In Cambridge, the Maternity Wards at the County Hospital stimulated what was already a growing demand, and we support wholeheartedly the desire of organisations of working women for a Municipal Home in this district. **Whether the new Home is run**

by the Borough or by the County, it must be a truly public service, and free from all associations with Public Assistance or with charity.

Nor is hospital care enough; many mothers urgently need domestic help. A service of Home Helps for Mothers could be combined with a greatly needed scheme to help aged people in their homes.

The Staff of Health Visitors should be increased so as to provide greater care and supervision for children between one and five years of age. Infants up to one year are visited regularly and are taken to child welfare centres: these services should be extended so that the child is cared for until it goes to school and comes under the School Medical Service.

The three war-time Nurseries which are properly housed should be continued after the War as Nursery Schools or Classes for children from three to five. This need has already been stressed in the section of this pamphlet on Education. Here it may be added that such nurseries will serve a particular need in looking after children who, for some special reason such as the illness or absence of the mother, cannot be cared for at home. A residential Nursery is to be provided and this will, to some extent, meet the need.

The maternity and child welfare services must be planned as a whole to give first-rate facilities, which are particularly needed so that those who cannot afford elaborate private attention will never have to do without the best possible service.

PUBLIC HEALTH

In the field of Public Health, we have three main proposals to make:

1. **Slum Clearance** in the Town has been mentioned in the section on Housing, and little more needs to be said, for the urgency of the matter is beyond dispute. A start in demolishing insanitary houses in cramped and airless courts and yards had been made before the War, but it was only a start, and much remains to be done. As the Town is planned and building schemes are begun, more and more of these old places can be pulled down. The sites released can then be replanned and used for houses or flats convenient for people who wish to live near the centre of the Town.

2. **A Municipal Slaughterhouse or Abattoir** is badly needed. Before the War there were numerous slaughterhouses scattered about the Town, many of them surrounded by houses. A central abattoir, properly planned, would be more in accord with the practice of all up-to-date towns. It would ensure proper conditions for the handling of meat and would greatly facilitate inspection.

3. **A Municipal Lodging-house.** The existing accommodation for persons of small means, or for homeless people is totally inadequate.

It is true that voluntary effort is doing good work, both for men and women in need of a night's lodging, but much more is required. Existing lodging-houses are both over-full and out of date: Cambridge needs good and cheap accommodation under municipal control.

ENTERTAINMENTS, AMENITIES, ETC.

RIVER FRONTAGE. Beauty spots have often been spoiled by uncontrolled building, and for this reason we advocate a scheme for the control of the River Banks from Grantchester to Baits Bite Locks, so that their beauty may be preserved and give added pleasure to Cambridge citizens. Buildings should not be allowed to overlook and spoil the banks. The natural beauty of the College Backs, and the riverside at Bedford, which attracts many visitors to the town, set a good local example.

CAFETERIA AND RESTAURANTS. War-time experiments in municipal catering have been a great success. The British Restaurants help people who cannot reach their homes at midday, or have no time to cook. They should be continued after the War as a municipal service, and, with pleasant surroundings and a greater choice of food, they would become a popular feature of the Town, and charges could be revised to meet overhead costs. In districts where there is a need, but not enough customers, loss should be met from the total income of the restaurants, so that a flat rate could be charged at them all. The Cafeteria in the Corn Exchange is also a success, and has proved both the public need for such facilities, in which no commercial firm was interested, and the ability of the Council to supply them. Given better premises, with provision for table games and dancing to the radio, it is clear that such a cafeteria can be an excellent part of a Central Community Centre.

ENTERTAINMENTS AND SPORT. The Council Entertainments Committee has done valuable work during the War, and this should be expanded. **A Central Concert Hall owned by the Town is needed:** national conferences and public functions, which would bring trade to the Town, could then be held in Cambridge. **A Municipal Sports Ground** could well be provided, and the recreation grounds at Cherryhinton, Chesterton and St. Matthew's should be replanned. **A covered swimming bath** is needed in the Town: although Cambridge is fortunate in its bathing facilities for the summer, provision should be made for the winter too, and the children would benefit from the more generous provision of swimming lessons that would be possible with a covered bath.

APPROACH TO THE RAILWAY STATION. At present there is only one approach to the railway station. Residents in the neighbouring wards of Cherryhinton, Coleridge and Romsey have no direct access and no direct bus route. With the proposed development of the land between Coleridge Road and the L.N.E.R.'s property, we would press for access to the station from that point. Any plans submitted

for future improvements at the railway station should be passed only if this provision is included.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC FINANCE

As a Labour Party, we are convinced believers in municipal ownership of the public services, by which we mean the local bus services and the supply companies for water, electricity and gas.

In many towns these services are already owned and run by the community through the local Council, and the people of this country are insisting more and more that undertakings essential to the life of the community shall come under public ownership and control. For no less than education or hospitals are they vital to the life and well-being of the people of the Town, and for this reason they should be conducted primarily with a view to *serving public needs*. Only when public services are publicly owned can they become truly *public* services, planned to satisfy the needs of the citizens. Where privately owned, as in Cambridge, they are usually conducted so as to secure the maximum profit allowed by law, and the needs of the public come second. In the case of the local bus service, for example, considerations of profit must determine which routes have the most frequent services and what fares are charged. And yet the solution of our housing problem depends to no small extent on the bus services. People need to live away from the centre of the Town, but the high cost of a family's bus fares for the week may prevent their benefiting from newly planned Council houses on the outskirts of the Borough. It may here be noted that until the bus services are brought under public ownership, we consider that the Council should press for:

- (1) a maximum fare of 1½d. between the centre of the Town and the Borough boundaries.
- (2) Period tickets at cheap rates for regular passengers and school children.
- (3) More frequent services on the less crowded routes such as Cherryhinton and Trumpington, so as to encourage people to live and build in these areas.

There is also a strong case for public ownership of these public services on financial grounds alone.

Whenever the opportunity has arisen in recent years of starting or acquiring a public Utility Service, opponents have raised the bogey of the Municipal Debt. Let us see what the increase in the Municipal Debt would really mean in a case like this.

Now, we all know that the income of the Borough is raised mainly from the rates after allowing for grants from the Government. The amount a citizen pays depends on the size of his house and, therefore, on its annual valuation.

For major capital expenditure, such as the building of a new housing estate or the purchase of a public service, the Town can borrow money and create a Municipal Debt. Except in the case of Housing, these debts have to be paid off in thirty years. The question now arises of whether an increase in the debt would mean that we should have to raise the rates in order to pay the money off—and the answer is “NO.” For as soon as the service is bought with the borrowed money, it becomes an asset producing money for the Town. At the moment, the profit made on the undertaking goes to the shareholders who, in the case of the water companies, for example, receive each year 10 per cent. on the original capital and 7 per cent. on the remainder. The Town could borrow money to buy these services at about 3 to 4 per cent. interest, and with a sum set aside to pay off the debt in thirty years, the total interest payment would not be more than 5 to 6 per cent. of the capital each year, so that the profit now going to the shareholders would, in thirty years, buy the service for the Town. After that, we could either reduce the charges or else use the profit to lower the rates.

By contrast, we have been paying 10 per cent. on the original capital of the Waterworks for the last 90 years, and we are still no nearer owning it!

The talk about the huge Municipal Debt is, then, really a bogey. Nobody feels very disturbed by the immense increase in our debt caused by the Housing programme before the War. The houses are there as an asset, and the rent roll is about £67,000 a year. The profit we pay to the owners of shares in the Utility Companies is really interest on a debt we owe them, and as things are at the moment, we shall go on paying interest for ever, and shall never own the companies in the end!

Finally, purchase of the Utility Companies would enable us as a Town to acquire capital assets in excess of our total debt for all purposes. Certain towns showed this in 1937-38, for example Leeds, with its assets of £22 million, Glasgow, with £35 million, and the London County Council, with £14½ million. Such towns are in a very strong financial position, and can run cheaper and more efficient services than can private companies.

That, then, is our case for pressing that these Services should early come under public ownership in Cambridge.

A word must now be added on the whole cost of the planning proposed in this pamphlet. Many of the expenses of housing and other forms of building, etc., can be met by borrowing, and we are none of us anxious to see the rates go up to cover the other expenses. But there are some people whose only idea is to keep the rates down at any cost, and they promise this to the electors. We must realise that economy in the sense of wise spending is one thing, and economy in the sense of cutting down all expenditure is another. The important point is to ensure that the money is carefully spent on what increases

the amenities and enlarges the opportunities of ordinary people. If we tackle the problem of poverty on a national scale, we shall reduce the need for a great deal of municipal expenditure; and again, we must remember that some of the expenditure through the rates saves us money out of our pockets in other ways.

Ruthless economy is the policy of the mean spirited and selfish: public spirited people will want to see inequalities in the standard of living lessened, and opportunities for all increased, and to secure this, we have to plan. We have to plan expenditure on what we can afford as a community, and we believe that, to secure success, more and more of the things we need in common must be planned for and owned in common.

INDUSTRY

The question of Location of Industry is receiving the consideration of the Party. We are of the opinion that certain light industries might be extended and others introduced in order to provide alternative employment to the advantage of the community.

A FINAL WORD

Yes, this pamphlet is biased: it is biased in favour of altering and planning a number of things. None of its ideas are out of reach, and all have behind them the aim of making local government play its part in building a Britain without bad living conditions and without extremes of very rich and very poor. These things affect you: we all have a future to build, so let us face the future with our plans and we shall be doing our part towards making Cambridge a Town for all to be proud of.

This pamphlet is policy of the Labour Party: if you agree with it and wish to help to achieve its aims, join us to-day. The Labour Party stands for giving the best of education, housing and the good things of life to all and not just to those who are privileged.

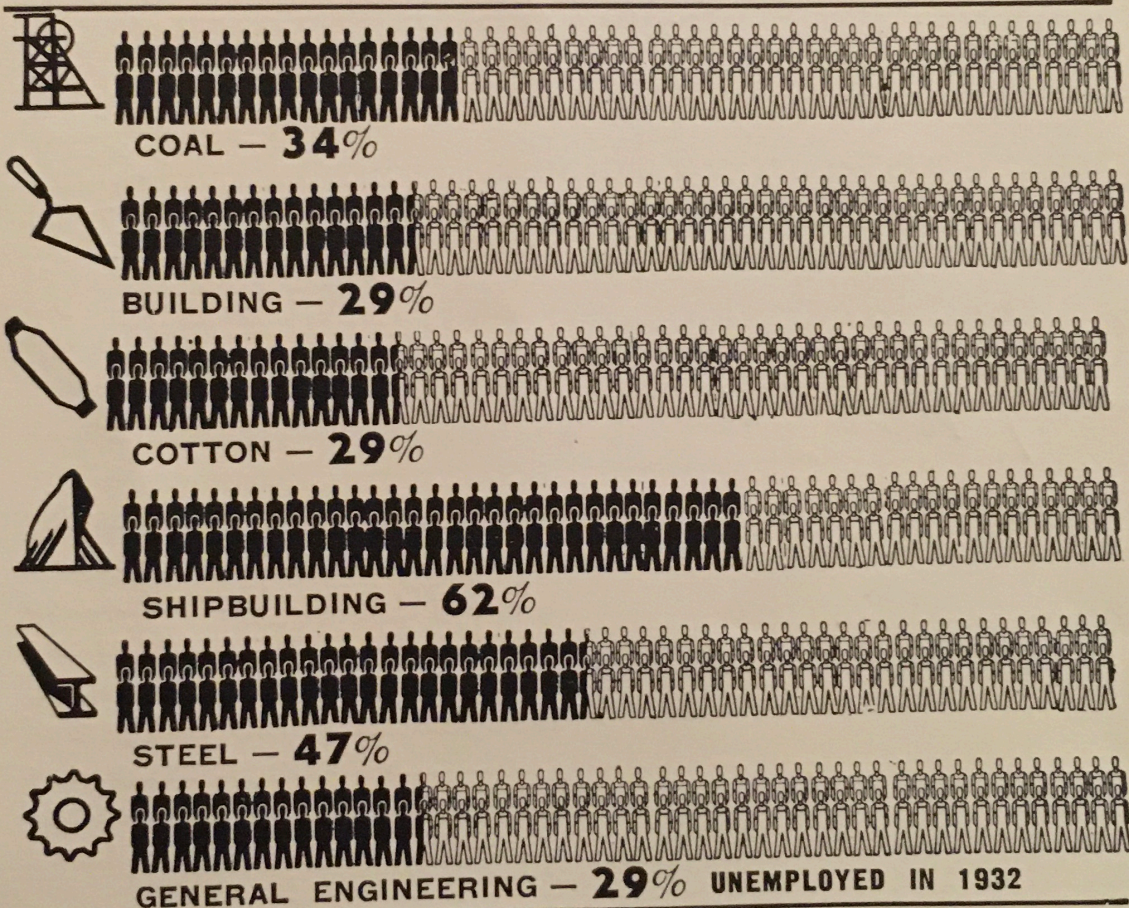
That is our bias—and we are proud of it.

THE BRITAIN WE'VE GOT TO CHANGE

UNEMPLOYMENT IN KEY INDUSTRIES IN THE GREAT SLUMP

The prosperity of Britain depends to a large extent upon her key industries—Coal, Cotton, Steel, Shipbuilding, Engineering. These were just the industries which suffered most severely in the great slump of 1931-32. The unemployment rate over the whole country

in 1932 was 22%. But in shipbuilding it rose to 62%. Over half of the workers in the shipyards were out of a job in 1932! Other industries suffered terribly. This is the Britain we've got to change—the *Daily Herald* is leading in the fight to change it.



read the

The *Daily Herald* is written by progressive people for progressive people—and it gives you the facts. Support for the *Daily Herald* means support for every force making for a Better Britain.

DAILY HERALD

because it's fighting for a Better Britain



This we Fight For



The little things in life are among the most precious; the right to a measure of harmless relaxation and the freedom to use it as one will, unrestricted, unsupervised, unregimented. This is a part of our English birthright that to-day we fight to defend—as Co-operation has fought for it for a hundred years.

Cambridge
 AND DISTRICT
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD
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